



INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORPORATION
WORLD BANK GROUP

EFFECTIVE POLICY ADVOCACY

- BACKGROUND READINGS FOR TRAINER -

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SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION TO POLICY ADVOCACY

BACKGROUND READING N° 1: What is Policy Advocacy¹?

In simple terms, advocacy is the act of influencing or supporting an issue or person. Policy Advocacy is the act of influencing or supporting a policy. In the present context, policies can be broadly defined to include:

- Laws
- Regulations
- Court Decisions
- Decrees
- Circulars
- Political party platforms
- Institutional policies

Policy advocacy may involve opposing the government's stand on specific issues. This can be quite challenging in some settings and areas. This needs to be factored into the policy advocacy activities of the BMO. The overall aim of the efforts is to establish and maintain a favourable business environment.

Policy advocacy can also be the act of proactively presenting new proposals to policy makers. Typically a distinction is made between *proactive* and *reactive* policy advocacy. A proactive approach to policy advocacy involves setting the agenda to ensure, for instance, that gaps are filled where enabling legislation is missing. The BMO will have significant influence in shaping the legislation. In contrast, a reactive approach to policy advocacy, is defined as one where the BMO does not enter the political decision making process until the late phases, by which time it can be more difficult to influence the law making process.

Many public policies directly affect business activity. This means the private sector needs to make its voice heard so that it can improve policies. The most important areas of focus typically include laws and other types of regulation in the following areas:

- Trade
- Labour
- Safety
- Transportation
- Finance
- Taxes
- Tariffs
- Other laws and regulations that get in the way of business activities

Policy advocacy should be geared towards creating a hospitable business climate for all members. Indeed, also non-members benefit from an improved business environment. Viewed through this lens, policy advocacy is a 'public good' in that it is non-rival, i.e. it can benefit all enterprises with out being depleted. In addition, it is not possible to isolate the positive effects to those that have invested efforts in advocacy.

¹ This Background Reading draws extensively on material from The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), *How to Advocate Effectively: A Guide Book for Business Associations*, Washington D.C, 2003..

What policy advocacy is not:

Policy advocacy is not about obtaining preferential treatment for one business or sector at the expense of others.

Policy advocacy is not about solving problems concerning members' day-to-day activities. If, however, daily obstacles are a plague to the entire business community, public policy advocacy campaigns aimed at the real causes of the problem, as opposed to the symptoms, could be envisaged.

BMOs should refrain from daily problem solving services related to conducting routine business transactions or settling disputes between members and the government. Such matters should be resolved through the services of lawyers, collection agencies, consultants and so forth.

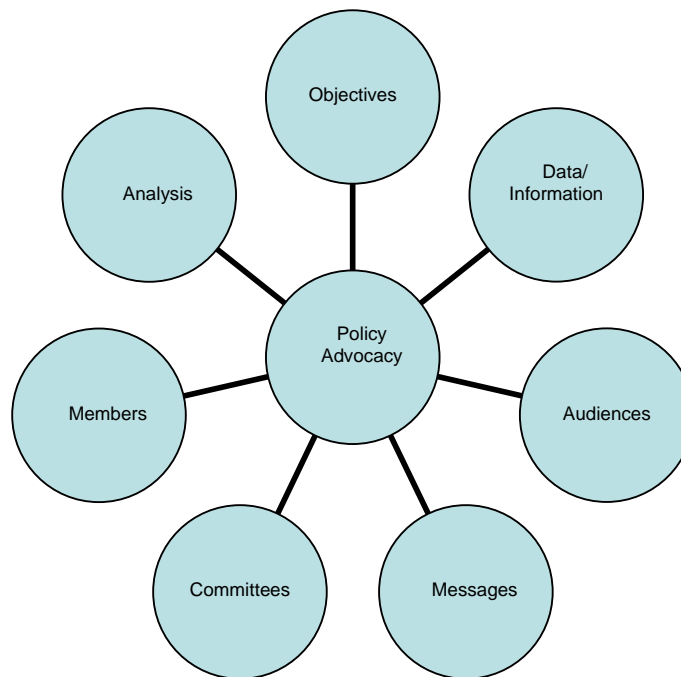
When a BMO provides a service that can be enjoyed mutually by all, or most, members it is of a public good nature. This is clearly the case for policy advocacy. When a BMO provides services that are directed towards a single member, or are mutually exclusive in consumption, then these are of a private good nature.

Advocating for more transparent and fair corporate taxation is a classic example of policy advocacy, i.e. something that would benefit all members and enterprises if implemented. On the other hand, a BMO that helps one of its members deal with tax inspectors to navigate opaque and conflicting tax codes cannot be counted as policy advocacy.

Key Challenges to Efficient Policy Advocacy

For many BMOs, effective policy advocacy remains a daunting task. In general, the following characteristics and issues are at the source of the challenges:

- The private public dialogue may be influenced by a legacy of mistrust and suspicion between private business people and public sector officials;
- The BMO may not have sufficiently well developed analytical capacities and organisational maturity for engaging the national policy formulation process with confidence and conviction;
- The membership base of the BMO may be too narrow for the organisation to enjoy sufficient legitimacy or indeed be representative of the business community;
- The BMO may lack the financial resources to effectively engage on an adequate scale.

Figure 1: Dimensions of Policy Advocacy

The subsequent sessions will address dimensions of these issues, and thereby help participants explore new ways of engaging in policy advocacy, and develop the necessary tools.

BACKGROUND READING N° 2: Why is Policy Advocacy Important?

Effective advocacy makes crucial, policy-relevant information widely available to several key audiences that influence public policy.

Primary beneficiaries of policy advocacy include:

Lawmakers who need sound information because they make policy decisions that affect the business community. In many cases, the businesses will decide on whether or not to support these same legislators. Sound policies foster an enabling enterprise climate, advance market-oriented reforms and benefit society as a whole. A hospitable business environment attracts investment and stimulates entrepreneurship which, in turn, generates economic growth and well-paid quality jobs. All citizens can take advantage of these new opportunities.

Civil servants who, when provided with solid information about the effects of specific policies and regulations on business, are able to do a better job implementing and enforcing them.

The media who benefit greatly from BMO commentary and criticism. Journalists gather a great deal of their information from official government sources, but they are better able to analyze this information and balance their reporting once they have listened to the alternative voice of BMOs, think tanks, and other organisations representing different interests in society.

In fact, BMOs often compete with other organisations that represent other points of view and stances on policy issues.

Strengthening the BMO in the process

By actively engaging in advocacy, a business association becomes a serious actor in the policymaking arena and strengthens itself. Advocacy equips BMOs with the necessary information, motivation and tools with which to protect and improve the business climate and thereby service its members.

A structured, yet bold approach to policy advocacy can help launch the BMO on a positive trajectory that spirals it to ever-higher levels of professionalism and hence value creation for its members.

Why do we need BMOs as advocates?

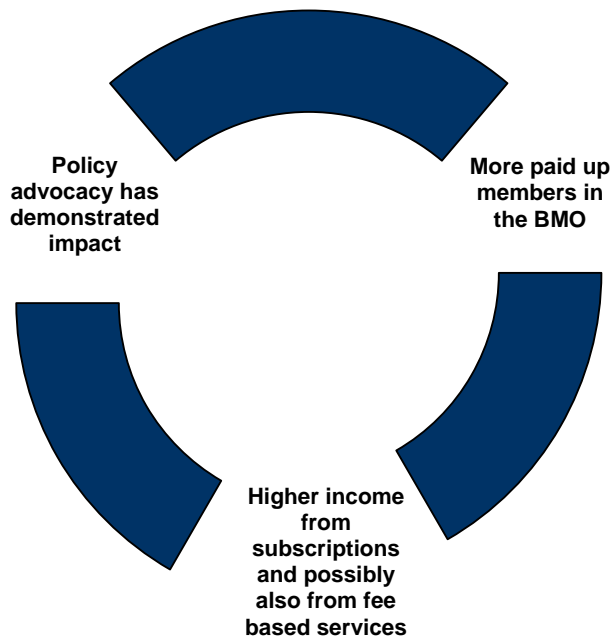
The benefits of BMOs engaging in policy advocacy can be gauged from the perspectives of the private sector, and from the perspective of government or policy makers respectively.

From the private sector perspective it is well documented that the climate for enterprise in many developing countries is rather unfavourable. Strong advocates are needed to influence policy makers to adopt more enabling enterprise legislation. Second, the entrepreneurial tissue in most emerging markets and developing countries is made up of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). This does not preclude the existence of a few national champions or conglomerates. The latter type of enterprise typically has easy access to policy makers, while the voices of the former group is often too weak to have an impact. BMOs can serve as catalysts that gather the views into one single voice or clear message to Government. Organising this way increases the likelihood that the

government will adopt a specific policy, implement a certain reform measure or enforce an existing rule/policy.

From the Government's perspective, two salient features of BMO advocacy are usually forwarded. First, it is much more efficient and cost effective for the Government to deal with one representative of the enterprise sector, rather than spending time listening to the views and needs of a multitude of enterprises. Second, policy makers may actually profit from advocacy by getting access to first-hand business information and feedback on policies. BMO advocacy may allow the Government to learn about problems that are brewing under the surface in the private sector. This currency of information can be valuable, as it makes it easier for government to nib problems in the bud.

Figure 2: The Virtuous BMO Circle



At the risk of simplifying, most BMO follow a development pattern similar to the one in figure 3 below. During the initial phase, the organisation has the characteristics of a loosely structured club of enterprise executives. At this stage, the organisation is primarily a forum for networking, exchange of information and discussion of issues related to the business environment. The organization has no or very limited permanent staff. No real organisational structure has been established and the BMO has little external exposure. Members of the board manage the main part of the BMO's activities.

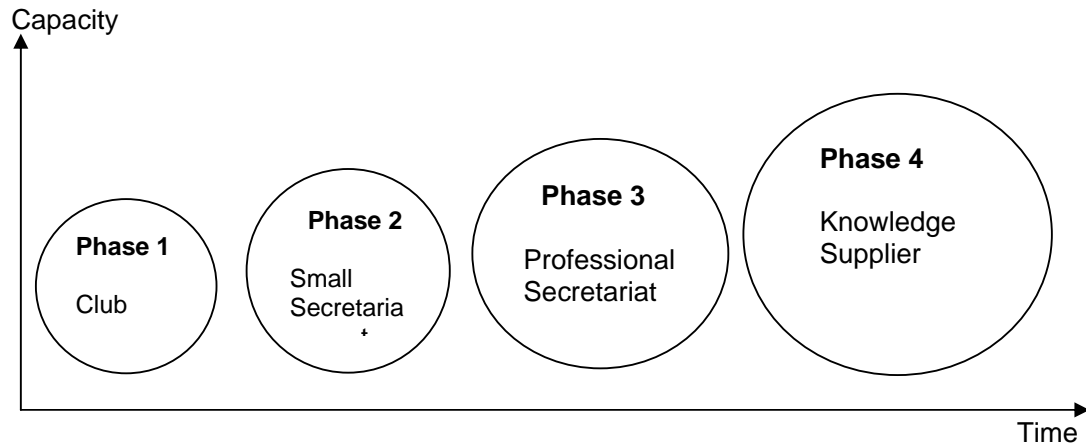
In the second phase, the organisation typically establishes a *small secretariat* with a few experts. The secretariat relies heavily on assistance from members. Membership recruitment is strongly prioritised for income purposes, but membership retention is neglected due to lack of resources and experience.

During phase three, the BMO develops a professional secretariat with increasingly autonomous operations from the governing body. A range of services is provided to members, including training, business information and fee-based market/investment services. On the policy area, the BMO becomes more influential and is capable of

engaging in complex long-term dialogue with legislators. In this phase the BMO is performing a range of different activities and has reached a size which makes it possible for a more elaborate system for policy advocacy.

In the final phase, the BMO continuously builds capacity to be pro-active within all areas that are relevant to its members. By being a knowledge supplier, the association is able to set the agenda for the discussions within these subjects. Professional experts handle the subjects on behalf of the BMO both within policy advocacy and membership services - often from a more informed position than external counterparts.

Figure 3: Phases of Organisational Development



Sound policy advocacy raises the profile of the BMO amid policymakers and enhances its reputation within the business community as a useful membership service provider. This increases contributions from existing members and attracts new members. With more funding, business associations can devote more resources to advocacy and thereby enhance advocacy strategies and tactics. A larger membership means more voting constituents and thus more influence amid elected policymakers.

SESSION 2: UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES AND THE STAKEHOLDER ENVIRONMENT

BACKGROUND READING N° 3: Collecting Information

All assessments of issues and policies and the backdrop, against which they are proposed or developed, involve the collection of information.

This first session in this part of the training course is basic in the sense that it lays out the very fundamentals for collecting and maintaining current data and information. This session is not about information related to the views and stance of members. This equally important dimension will be covered under Session C2, *Soliciting the Views of Members*.

Data and information can be viewed as the raw materials that are used in the subsequent analytical work. An analogy is that of cooking a meal where the ingredients are processed by a chef. Fresh quality ingredients make for a better meal, just as current and reliable data make for a better analysis. The analysis can only be as good as the information it is based on.

The main purpose of collecting information is to better understand the issue and its impact on members. A prominent reason for failure in advocacy campaigns is that BMOs do not spend adequate time understanding the issue and its context. The next two sessions (see *Background Reading N°4 Assessing Impacts on Members* and *N°5 Analysing Stakeholders*) are concerned with the actual processing of the information that is collected.

In many countries, accessing useful and reliable information can be challenging. The primary challenge becomes one of making best use of what is available.

The BMO should aim at accessing the same data/information as the government and other organisations engaging in the policy dialogue.

When the BMO starts collecting information it is important to evaluate what information is readily available and where gaps exist. It is most cost effective to scan existing sources (Secondary sources) before turning to more expensive sources of information (typically a mix of primary and secondary sources).

- Primary information: Data collected for the first time.
- Secondary information: Published and/or processed information available from other sources.

Primary information gathering is one of the topics covered under Session C2, *Soliciting the Views of Members*. Primary information collection can be expensive and time consuming. It also requires a certain skill level and experience for the results to be useful.

Of the different sources of secondary information available, the BMO should pay particular attention to what statistical information it can obtain from different service providers and other stakeholders.

It is usually possible to download data directly from websites of national statistical bureaus, government ministries, other national and international organisations, such as the EU, the World Bank, etc.

Additional sources of secondary information that should be considered are surveys carried out by other institutions. These can sometimes be found in periodicals on the internet.

Sources of information that can provide historical background, technical details and political context include the following:

Attending seminars. Seminars may be organised by the government, by other organisations such as research institutes, or NGOs. In addition to information on a particular subject, seminars provide networking opportunities and are often worth attending to find out who else is interested in the same issues. This can be useful for extending the network and identifying potential coalitions partners and opponents.

Talking with members to find out more about how the organisation's members relate to an issue, or what they know about an issue. Members are often able to provide valuable technical information about the specific issues or consequences of legislative initiatives (more extensively covered under C2, *Soliciting the Views of Members*).

Internet sites. For more in depth information about a specific topic, internet sites can be very efficient

Talking with journalists. Journalists generally make their knowledge public through the media, in articles or via television or radio. However, they seldom put out everything they know about an issue or topic. It is often worthwhile having face-to-face meetings with journalists, to tap into their (passive) knowledge.

Talking with government officials. Close personal contacts in the public administration and/or government can be valuable sources of information.

Talking with other BMOs or civil society organisations. Other organisations (like-minded or not) are probably interested in the same issues, and will also be looking for information. They might be willing to share their knowledge so that it can be used in the activities and analysis of the BMO.

Once information on an issue has been collected (and possibly processed), it is important to store it in a structured and accessible way in the organisation so that others can benefit from it. This will add to the collective memory of the organisation. To be useful, the information needs to be updated and maintained on a timely basis. For quantitative data, the maintenance schedule typically follows the publication frequency of relevant statistics.

At DI, analysis of quantitative data is extensively based on statistics from the national statistical bureau. Most of these data are accessible online for free, or through a subscription for some series. Primary data collected by DI is stored in an oracle database, and information is retrieved with various data processing software.

As a general rule, work files and documents are kept on shared drives, so that all staff of the same department or team have easy access to relevant information.

BACKGROUND READING N° 4: Assessing Impacts on Members

An impact assessment is an analysis of the likely costs and benefits associated with the introduction of a new policy or other effective changes in the regulatory environment. Such changes include not only adoption of new regulations, but also amendments and abolition of existing legislation, as well as more vigorous execution of existing regulations. Here, the terms 'policy' and 'regulation' are used as short hand for all of the above types of regulatory changes.

The collection of evidence (*Background Reading N° 3: Collecting Information*) may have provided some indications of how members are likely to be affected by an issue or proposal. However, it is necessary to dig a little deeper to obtain a more precise estimate (if possible quantified) of how members are likely to be affected. The results of impact assessments should form the foundations of the dialogue with public officials. Often times, the results of an impact assessment can be gainfully fed to the media (see *Background Reading No 10: Implementing the Advocacy Strategy*).

It can be tempting to jump this step in the advocacy process and go directly to the outcome of the advocacy campaign. However, it is critical that the BMO thoroughly understands the issue/policy at hand, its potential impacts, and the environment in which it is set.

The process of undertaking an impact assessment helps the BMO to

- Think through the full impact of the policy proposal or issue at hand;
- Assess options;
- Determine whether the benefits justify the costs;
- Determine whether some sectors or industries are likely to be disproportionately affected.

From the point of view of a BMO, impact assessments are tools that help focus thinking about an issue, while providing ammunition to the advocacy of the organization.

The analysis should be rooted in fact and evidence and be as objective as possible. The reputation of the organisation is on the line; it takes years to build a reputation for honesty and balanced views, while it only takes one unsubstantiated emotional statement to ruin it.

Impact assessments can be done at different levels of complexity, depending on the problem and the sensitivity and importance of the issue to members.

Basic elements in a typical impact assessment:

1. Is the issue correctly defined?

The issue should be precisely described so as to avoid misunderstandings and minimize possibilities for misinterpretations. The statement should define the nature and the magnitude of the issue. If possible, a basic risk assessment addressing the probability of an event occurring and how serious the effect is likely to be if it does occur should form part of the presentation of an issue. An explanation of why the issue is brought up now must be included in the presentation of the issue or proposal.

2. Is Government action or inaction justified?

Is there a case for government intervention, or could the issue that the regulation or policy is intended to address be left to the market? It is not always clear that Government intervention is part of the solution.

If the answer to the above question is 'yes', how should the Government intervene? There are in general several, often competing options:

- Economic instruments such as taxes and subsidies
- Mandatory regulation
- Voluntary agreements
- Self-regulation
- Public service provision
- Producing and distributing information to enterprises/the public

3. Do the expected benefits of intervention/regulation justify the true costs, i.e. including those likely to be incurred by members?

If possible, a cost/benefit analysis should be undertaken using realistic costs and benefits (also the indirect ones).

It must be determined what the costs and benefits are likely to be, including details on who will bear the costs, and who will reap the benefits. Costs should include the ones directly associated with the policy or regulation, as well as costs that can be linked indirectly to the policy.

Direct costs and benefits are often obvious, and can more or less easily be quantified. The major challenge lies in identifying the indirect costs and benefits. This may require a little more work and creative thinking, but there can be important value added in this step of the analysis. By exposing all the links in the impact chain (think of dominos that fall as chain) and summing up the balance, a bottom line can be established. A sound impact assessment may be what is needed to turn the tide for or against a proposed regulation. This step of the analysis can also help identify any unintended impacts of a given proposal.

In many cases, regulation will entail benefits to some while imposing costs on others. These differences need to be made clear. Sometimes different members of the BMO will be impacted differently. In this case, strategic management decisions and extensive consultation of committees (see *Background Reading N° 6: The Advocacy Committee*) may be required as part of the analysis.

If at all possible, impacts should be quantified. This is the only way to compare different costs and benefits, and identify trade-offs. As a general rule quantitative assessments should be used when at all possible, and qualitative assessments only as a last resort. This does not mean that qualitative arguments are less important than the quantitative ones. However, experience shows that they tend to carry less weight with the public and among policy makers.

Once impacts have been quantified, they should be converted to a monetary value. Some costs and benefits will easily lend themselves to this type of conversion. This includes expenditures and savings on equipment, labour, other production inputs, costs of licenses, costs of expert advice, taxes and subsidies.

At other times, the impact assessment will require putting a monetary value on impacts that have no obvious market price. This is the case for several environmental, human and social impacts. In some cases, the observed market price may not be reliable in

that it may not reflect the true economic costs. This is the case when exchange and interest rates are fixed or controlled, or if prices are distorted if for example a small number of enterprises hold a dominant position in the market.

Several techniques can be used to calculate the monetary value of benefits and costs that do not have a market value, or where the market value is distorted.

Time savings can be given a monetary value by multiplying the time saved by the average wages/earnings of the beneficiaries.

Improvements in health can be given a value by studying the savings in costs of treating the illness; or by estimating the improvements in beneficiaries' productivity.

Training and education can be valued by looking at the difference in wage rates of better and less well educated workers.

Environmental benefits and costs can be valued through use of 'willingness to pay' surveys to see how much people are willing to pay for improvements, or how much compensation they need to accept an increased level of pollution.

If a *distorted market price* is an issue, the rates and levels prevailing in other countries can be used as proxies; alternatively, the prices and rates observed in non-regulated or distorted markets can be used, if these exist.

Check List: Four essential components of an impact assessment:

1. A brief, clear introduction explaining the proposed regulation, the problem the regulation is seeking to address, why the action is being taken, what is proposed to be done, and the desired outcome
2. An explanation and quantification of expected benefits
3. An assessment of the likely costs – both direct and indirect
4. A clear bottom line on the size of the net Benefit or Cost

Component 1: Clear Explanation of Purpose/Effect

This explanation should include:

- What problem the policy is seeking to address
- A statement of what the policy is designed to achieve
- Reasons why the policy is necessary or unnecessary

Component 2: Examination of Benefits

The examination of benefits should address:

- Type and nature of direct benefits
- Number of enterprises (in numbers and by employment) likely to benefit
- Size of any expected direct benefits Identification of any indirect benefits
- Adding direct and indirect benefits together, expressed as annual sums

Component 3: Assessment of Costs

The assessment of costs should address:

- Who is likely to face costs (by enterprise type and industry, in numbers and by employment?)
- Size and type of direct costs
- Identification of any indirect costs
- Adding direct and indirect costs together, expressed as annual sums

Component 4: Adding costs and benefits

This final stage of the analysis should consist of:

- Subtracting total annual costs from total annual benefits
- If positive, the policy has a Net Benefit
- If negative, the policy has a Net Cost

Case I: The Impact of the Avian Influenza Epidemic on the Vietnamese Economy
An Estimate by the World Bank in Vietnam, February 2004.

Case II: Assessing the impact of higher minimum wages on the labour market and the economy, by the Ugandan Manufacturers Association, 2005.

BACKGROUND READING N° 5: Analysing Stakeholders

Stakeholder analysis is the foundation tool for all social analysis. It is a systematic methodology that uses qualitative data to determine the interests and influence of different groups in relation to a new proposed policy or in relation to an aspect of the business environment that the BMO would like to change.

A BMO should always consider who the key stakeholders in its environment are.

A stakeholder can be defined as anyone with an interest (a stake) in an issue, project, company or organisation. Stakeholders include shareholders of companies, members of BMOs, directors of companies, BMOs or public institutions, employees, suppliers, consumers, policy makers, regulators, non-governmental organisations and the community at large.

Key stakeholders are:

- Stakeholders that will be affected by the proposal;
- Stakeholders that are able to affect the proposal's chances of success.

Identification of key stakeholders often varies according to how the discourse has developed with respect to the issue at hand. It is therefore important to understand the issue in this light. Whereas some issues can be characterised by key actors having a relatively open and mature discussion, deliberation on other issues may involve a high degree of conflict. It is possible to assess the state of the stakeholder environment by asking the following questions:

- Is the policy area a priority for the government?
- Has news regarding the policy area recently been featured in the media?
- What similar policies have been approved or rejected in recent years?
- Is the topic of interest to the general public?
- Do channels exist for members to participate in these decisions?
- Has there been prior interaction between BMOs and relevant ministries on the issue? If so, what were the outcomes?

Finding answers to these types of questions enables the BMO to assess whether the issue is ripe for dialogue, what stance the government might take, and where to look for key stakeholders.

The next step for the BMO is to develop an overview of the most important decision makers. Regardless of whether these are individuals or organisations, it is vital to know whether they oppose or support the issue. It is important for the BMO to have a clear idea of who it can rely on, who will oppose it, and most importantly, who controls the decision.

The more information about the stakeholders the BMO gathers, the easier it will be to devise an efficient advocacy strategy.

Table1: Stakeholder Map

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Stakeholder	Stakeholder Importance	Stakeholder Advantages*	Stakeholder Disadvantages*	Advantages vs. Disadvantages	= 2x5	Preventive Measures
<i>Who is the stakeholder?</i>	<i>1: Not important 10: Very important</i>	<i>Description of known advantages associated with the issue/policy</i>	<i>Description of known disadvantages associated with the issue/policy</i>	<i>1: Advantage completely outweighs disadvantage 10: Disadvantage completely outweighs advantage</i>	<i>1: Marginal issue 100: Very important issue/policy</i>	<i>Description of measures that can be used to lower the point score under '6'</i>
Ministries						
Advisors						
Opposition						
Strong business leaders						
NGOs						

* Advantages and disadvantages can also be thought of as the level of support / resistance that one can expect in relation to a specific advocacy issue.

This is a useful tool for classifying actors according to their roles, degrees of influence, possible support or opposition to a policy issue. Though policy makers will make the final decisions on policy, other actors can greatly influence their choices.

The stakeholder analysis helps gauge the strength of opposition and see if there are ways of mitigating it. In conjunction with the impact assessment, the analysis also helps identify potential winners and losers and establish the relative power and influence that different groups can exert.

Mapping stakeholders in a table like the one introduced here allows the staff of the BMO working with advocacy to know who the allies are, where the opposition is likely to come from, and in what strength.

SESSION 3: ORGANISING INTERNALLY

BACKGROUND READING N° 6: The Advocacy Committee

Organisations and associations that are interested in engaging in advocacy should form an advocacy committee. The committee should not be too large, maybe just 5-7 members, while still being representative of the association's diverse membership segments.

If the BMO represents small, medium sized and large enterprises in different industries, the advocacy committee should have representatives from all enterprise sizes and from several different industries. Some will represent both an industry and a size group. It may not be possible to have all industries represented directly in the committee.

In addition to being representative, committee members should ideally be familiar with key regulatory, legislative, and policy issues of concern to members. They must also agree to advocate issues that are of concern to members, and not just focus on issues of direct concern to their own business.

It is essential that committee members be highly committed to the cause of the organisation. Committee members must be willing to devote a significant amount of their time to advocacy related matters on a regular basis. This entails:

- Attending committee meetings
- Shaping and overseeing advocacy efforts
- Reading, editing, and approving strategy documents and publications
- Contacting association members and policymakers when appropriate

The chairperson of the committee is responsible for keeping the committee's activities on track and ensuring that the committee goals are met. Beyond the qualifications required to be a committee member, ideally the chair should have:

- Proven team-building and leadership skills
- A thorough understanding of the policymaking environments
- Useful connections with relevant policymakers.

The director of the business association will often not have sufficient time to dedicate to advocacy committee work. However, the chairperson of the advocacy committee should have a good working relationship with the association director, with the other committee members and with the association members at large.

In order to accomplish its mission in an effective and timely manner, the advocacy committee should ideally be allocated a budget and dedicated staff. If the BMO has room for a committee budget line, and even some staff time, the chair should estimate the budgetary needs for planned activities over the next one to two years. This will give some predictability and help determine how many committee staff members or consultants will be hired from outside the organization and how many association staff members can offer their services to the committee.

The BMO staff working with the committee should possess most of the following characteristics:

- Research skills for collecting information on issues relevant to the BMO
- Good media and public relation skills
- Be able to build coalitions around important causes

- The ability to network with policymakers, and to establish cooperative working relationships with policymakers' staff

It is crucial that the BMO's secretariat, or dedicated staff, support the work of the advocacy committee by providing the right information at the right time.

Case: Servicing the Advocacy Committee at the Confederation of Danish Industries, see *Handout N° 9*.

Staff from the businesses of the members of the committee can sometimes complement the staff of the advisory committee. At times, the committee may need to hire legal or advocacy experts in order to draft key pieces of legislation or to handle a particularly important issue. Such individuals can be hired on a contractual or part-time basis as needed. Many retired lawyers or civil servants who have good connections will sometimes offer their services at reasonable rates.

Certain staff members should be made responsible for monitoring what is going on concerning a certain set of issues. This entails constantly being on top of what policymakers, the public and non-governmental organizations that are in accord with or in opposition to the BMO are talking about and doing (see also *Background Reading N° 3 Collecting Information* and *N°5 Analysing Stakeholders*). This will minimize the possibility of policy surprises and will give the advocacy committee adequate time to shape discussions and policies before they are officially debated or enacted. An association often has a better chance of influencing policies before they are enacted than afterwards. Once policies are enacted, proponents will often fiercely defend them.

The committee should meet regularly to ensure effective collaboration and to troubleshoot if necessary. One simple way of doing this is for the chairperson to pick a consistent time, so that committee members can keep that time slot free on a regular basis. The frequency of meetings depends on the amount of activity and therefore might change from time to time.

BACKGROUND READING N° 7: Soliciting the Views of Members

It is vital for any BMO to listen to members and understand their grievances, needs, and ideas. It is also vital for any organisation to keep its members informed about results that have been secured. This builds legitimacy.

In the context of advocacy, it is especially important that members are heard before the strategy is finalised and implemented.

If the BMO has recently been set up, or if it has been a while since members were last heard either in general or in relation to a particular issue, a survey of members views may be needed.

The techniques that are presented and discussed during this session can obviously be employed for collecting information more widely as well (see *Background Reading N° 3 Collecting Information*).

Whatever methods are used in the survey or investigation, a number of different steps are involved. All these steps are important for the reliability, relevance and cost effectiveness of the investigation:

Reviewing existing information: Any investigation needs to complement rather than duplicate existing information, otherwise it wastes the time and resources of both the BMO and the member enterprises.

Recording the information: Even where questions are asked and reliable responses given, if this is not appropriately recorded then the information cannot be meaningfully analysed.

Checking for reliability both within and between interviews it is necessary to establish the reasons for any contradictory information and/or the limitations of any practical conclusions which can be drawn.

Ending the investigation: The ways in which both interviews/workshops and the assessment as a whole is ended is crucial not only for courtesy reasons, but also for the reliability of any subsequent interviews and assessments.

Table 2: Survey Techniques²

	Qualitative	Quantitative
Examples of techniques	Focus Group: A semi-structured interview conducted among a small number of respondents simultaneously.	Personal Interview: A questionnaire based interview. This is the most expensive and time-consuming of the three (generic) quantitative methods.
	In-depth interview: An unstructured personal interview, which relies on extensive probing to get a respondent to talk freely about a subject.	Telephone Interview: A questionnaire based telephone interview. This can be done from the office of the BMO. The questionnaire is typically shorter than the one use for personal interviews to minimize impatience and maximize integrity, which is more difficult to manage over the phone.
		Mail Interview: Mail-out interviews are typically used to contact members, who are hard to reach by telephone or in person. As response rates tend to be low, telephone interviews are often required to achieve a satisfactory response rate.

² Adapted from "Effective Advocacy in Uganda: A Guide to Impacting Policy and Law Making", Regulatory Best Practice Programme, UK.

Table 3: Strengths and Weaknesses of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible • Enables exploration of attitudes and concepts • Secures in-depth understanding of issues • Allows studies of motivational behaviour and patterns, e.g. how individuals interact with their environment, or cope with change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample sizes are often small, and not representative in themselves • Requires good prior understanding of key issues to be fruitful • The usefulness of surveys tends to vary with the lucidity and expressiveness of respondents
Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces statistical data • Survey estimates can be defined • Can measure the extent, prevalence, size and strength of observed characteristics • Can determine the importance of specific factors in influencing outcomes • Past surveys are relatively easy to replicate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be quite expensive • Sample size may not allow for unbiased estimates • Structured interview hinders detailed exploration of reasons • Requires key concepts to be clearly defined and translated into meaningful survey questions. 'Fuzzy' concepts are difficult to measure

It may be necessary to combine different methods at different stages of the assessment in order to build on their complementarities and address their weaknesses.

- Qualitative unstructured interviews on attitudes or more sensitive issues may be added on to a structured questionnaire either as follow-up to particular questions or as a separate section.
- Questions on attitudes and perceptions indicated through qualitative methods can be added to surveys and questionnaires for quantification.

A typical questionnaire could ask members to rank:

- A set of specific issues in order of priority
- A set of proposed solutions for each issue

Focus group meetings is another way to gauge the views of members, and get ideas and inputs for the work of the advocacy committee.

Members are busy running their businesses and already have extensive reporting obligations to public authorities, and should not be burdened with many additional surveys. It is important to carefully consider why and when surveys are really needed.

In soliciting the views of members, DI uses all the techniques and methods discussed in this session. Different techniques are used for different purposes. Interactions and everyday exchanges with members are actually the most commonly used way of staying in touch with members and keeping abreast with their views and needs.

BACKGROUND READING N° 8: Outlining the Advocacy Strategy

All the various activities and tasks now start to come together. At this stage, it is important to maintain focus, look for the best leverage points and target solutions that are both feasible and will have the largest impact vis-à-vis the issue or policy area.

The following topics and questions should be considered carefully as the organisation develops the basic outline of the advocacy strategy:

- The desired outcome should be determined
- Selection of the policy option that can most effectively be addressed through advocacy and which will have the greatest impact on the issue or policy proposal
- (How) can opponents be neutralised?
- What is the likelihood of success?
- Is there potential for coalitions around the issue?
- Are there potential risks associated with the strategy?

As any other programme or project, advocacy initiatives require clear and specific goals. When goals are vague or poorly articulated, there is a considerable risk that different people will have diverging perceptions of goal attainment.

Goals are the specification of what an advocacy initiative should accomplish. Goals for an advocacy strategy need to be SMART:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Achievable**
- **Realistic**
- **Time-bound**

The goals should clearly state: what will change, who will make that change, by how much and by when.

When goals are vague and ambiguous it is difficult to clearly understand what the advocacy initiative is trying to achieve and hard to maintain focus. This also makes it hard to evaluate your efforts.

Advocacy campaigns or strategies that attempt to fix everything run the risk of changing nothing in the process. Succeeding first with smaller objectives will give the organization more enthusiasm, experience and credibility to conquer objectives that are more ambitious.

Target Audience

Target audience: The person or group of people who can bring about the change the BMO hopes to achieve. Public decision makers are often the primary target or audience of an advocacy strategy (see *Background Reading N° 4 Reaching the Audience* for details concerning primary and secondary audiences).

The methodology introduced in relation to the stakeholder analysis of *Background Reading N° 5 Analysing Stakeholders* can be used to identify audiences and track developments. *Background Reading N° 9 Tailoring the Message* deals with the actual content and wording of the strategy depending on the audience that is targeted.

Identifying the Allies and the Opponents

Allies and collations are important for the success of an advocacy initiative. The stakeholder analysis will point to the organisation's potential partners. It is equally important to know who the potential enemies are, and think about their possible threat level.

Case: Prioritizing Advocacy Objectives in ZACCI

SESSION 4: REACHING THE AUDIENCE

BACKGROUND READING N° 9: Defining/Tailoring the Message

A message tells the target audience what they are being asked to do, why it is worth doing and the positive impact of such action. Sometimes there will be limited time to get the message across, other times the same core message must be repeated almost indefinitely before a breakthrough is reached.

A successful advocacy strategy entails communicating effectively with many different audiences in order to:

- Win the support of those who are undecided
- Earn the support of some individuals and groups who were initially opposed
- Strengthen the commitment of the original supporters

To achieve this, the advocacy materials need to be targeted to the audience that the strategy is trying to influence and delivered in a timely manner. In some cases, the best way to proceed may be a straightforward account of an issue; in other situations, there may be a need for a more in-depth treatment of the issue in order to be persuasive.

Keeping it consistent and simple

It is extremely important to be sure of the content of the message before it is disseminated. Regardless of who is communicating with the government - the chairman of the board, the head of the advocacy committee, or a member of staff -- it is imperative that all convey the same message. Presenting an inconsistent message is a common failure in advocacy campaigns, and it can be very damaging to the credibility of the organisation.

Experience also shows that messages should be kept simple and tight. This is especially so when the audience is addressed through the media (*Background Reading N° 10 Implementing the Advocacy Strategy* deals more thoroughly with media relations).

Whether the message is short and concise or more lengthy, it should in addition to being simple:

- Appeal to an audience's self-interests (why they should want to move in the same direction)
- Be convincing as to why the issue is important and why it needs to be supported
- Be concise
- Indicate what steps, if any, need to be taken
- Include answers to anticipated questions

Messages to policymakers should include:

- Why this issue is important
- How many people/and or groups support it
- How many enterprises and jobs are (potentially) affected by the issue
- Lists of positive and negative impacts of the policy proposal
- What specific action needs to be taken, including possibly adoption, change, or abolition of a policy, law, circular, decree, or other legislation

Primary and secondary audiences

A distinction is usually made between primary and secondary audiences. The primary audience consists of those individuals with direct authority to make policy changes (e.g. Ministers, Members of Parliament, etc.). Informing or persuading the primary audience about a policy issue is the centrepiece of any advocacy strategy.

Secondary audiences are those who can influence the decisions of the primary audience. Secondary audiences may include interest groups, business leaders, local organisations, specific groups among the public, or in some cases even external players such as the World Bank, the WTO or major trading partners.

The AIDA Model

In general, external communications can be structured by applying the AIDA Model:

Attention

Interest

Desire

Action

When communicating with external stakeholders (policy makers, civil servants, journalists, members), the first step should be focused on attempting to get their *attention*. Attention can be obtained through a catchy title/theme, or by presenting a significant fact or quote. When the attention has been secured, there is a short window of opportunity to describe in detail why the message is of *interest* to the audience. If done well, this should create a *desire* in the targeted audience for more information, or for buying into the idea or issue. This is a crucial phase, in which the recipient's awareness of the issue ideally escalates into a desire or wish for *action*. Here the term 'action' is understood simply to mean conversion of potential into actuality, to achieve or move closer to whatever is the aim. This can be for policy makers to endorse a position, for enterprises to join the BMO, or just for journalists to report on an important story or event.

BACKGROUND READING N° 10: Implementing the Advocacy Strategy

Once the appropriate key message has been selected, the final step is to choose the different activities that will help convey it. It will often be necessary to invest in a variety of activities and cultivate a large number of contacts in order to cover a range of potential opportunities for influencing the target audience. The BMO must keep a flexible activity schedule to ensure that it is able to seize opportunities – even if this means changes to the original plan.

Common advocacy activities typically include written and verbal approaches.

Written Approaches

- Policy position papers
- Media releases
- Issue briefs/newsletters

Verbal Approaches

- Dialogue platforms
- Policy conferences, seminars, and workshops
- One-on-one meetings (direct lobbying)

Policy Position Paper

Policy position papers can be used to influence those who are somewhat knowledgeable in an area and who are likely to spend time reading up on an issue. The target group for position papers includes policy makers and members of organisations that are active in the area, or are affected by a particular issue or policy.

Position papers should be as short as possible – no more than 4-5 pages. Statistics and data used to develop the paper can be submitted as an annex, as long as it is not necessary to read the annex in order to understand the main paper. Some organisations employ a number of highly specialised policy officers and therefore position papers contain a high degree of expert knowledge. *Position papers are written by experts but not for experts.* Whenever possible, all technical references should be removed from the position paper. If it is necessary to include references to technical concepts these should be introduced in a few simple terms.

Position papers are typically structured around the following:

- Summary
- Background
- Problem
- Assessment
- Recommendations

The *summary* section should be short and concise in its presentation of the content of the position paper. This is followed by a *background* section. Why is the BMO taking up this question? It could be because the organisation wants to put something on the agenda; it could also be because the organisation has been asked by others to present its views on certain issues. This is followed by a *review of the problem* -- often the most complex section. What is it that the reader should develop an opinion about?

What is the position of the organisation's sub committees? Is it an approach for small member companies? Does it require coordination with other organisations? The *assessment* section should list all relevant facts including costs and benefits to members. Any arguments against the recommendation should also be included. Finally, the *recommendations* reflect the position of the organisation, and what needs to be done to reach the desired outcomes.

Template for preparing position papers³

- **Summary (Max ½ page)**
Summarise the text to provide a quick introduction on the content of the position paper.
- **Background (Max ½ page)**
What is the background to the problem?
- **Problem (1-2 pages)** Describe the problem.
Why is it important to the organisation's members?
Why is it important to others?
Limit the use of technical terminology if possible.
- **Assessment (1-2 pages)**
Discuss different policy solutions including solutions that you would probably never recommend – this gives you credibility.
- **Recommendation (Max ½ page)**
Based on member feedback and analysis, select the policy solution you want to implement.

Media Releases

A media release can be an extremely effective tool in reaching and influencing a broad audience. Many reporters gather information for upcoming stories from media releases. The media release tells the reporter the who, what, when, where and why of a news story. Reporters receive many media releases in a given week so in order to get yours noticed, your release should quickly grab the reporter or editor's attention and the rest should convince them of the issue's news value. This said, it is also useful to remember that journalists have to gather a certain number of stories everyday. At times, it may therefore be possible to get the media to carry the story if the release is well prepared and almost fit to print or broadcast.

Guidelines for writing effective media releases

One of the most effective ways to accomplish political and economic reforms is by educating the general public on your key issues—swaying public opinion until a broad consensus for reform can be established. The easiest and least costly method for doing this is by using existing print and broadcast media resources. However, in order to use these resources efficiently, it is necessary to establish clear lines of communication between the BMO and those journalists who cover the relevant issues. One method of reaching out to these journalists is through a media release.

Media releases are the most common way to get your message out to journalists. However, in order to be effective they must also follow specific guidelines. These guidelines are intended to make your media release stand out from competing news

³ Adapted from "Effective Advocacy in Uganda: A Guide to Impacting Policy and Law Making", Regulatory Best Practice Programme, UK.

stories so that journalists, who are always rushing to meeting deadlines, are more apt to select your news release. The key elements of a good media release are:

Clarity. Certain key facts must be immediately apparent to a journalist viewing your media release. The name of the organization and logo should be at the top of the release. The release date must also be at the top, along with the name and phone number of the contact person because reporters may need additional information. Finally, the media release must have a clear title (bolded and large font) that briefly describes the content of the release. The title should be similar to a newspaper headline. Reporters will not read the materials if the content is not discernable.

Brevity. Media releases should rarely be more than one page and they should be double-spaced (use single spaces if it helps keep the release to one page). There is a natural inclination to include a lot of information in a media release. It is important to prioritize and only include the most essential information. The purpose of the release is to provide salient information and encourage reporters to contact you for additional details.

Details. Determining what key information to include can be difficult. A good rule to follow is: What is it you are trying to say? Who are you? Why is this important? You may not need to answer all of these, just make sure you did not miss anything. Again, answer each question as briefly as possible using only the most essential information.

Format. Whenever possible, add a short and relevant quote in the first or second paragraph from a leading figure in the organization, or an organization member involved in the issue. Quotes put a human face on the story. If the release is for immediate release indicate this on the top of the page. Reporters can also be requested to hold the information until a certain date. If this is the case, write "Embargoed until [a date/time]". The last paragraph should be used to provide a short description of the organization. Finally, you should conclude the media release with a symbol that indicates to reporters that there are no additional pages of information, e.g. "# # #" to identify the end of a release.

Events. If a media release is being used to announce an event it should be sent in the form of an invitation. This invitation should contain your name and logo at the top, followed by; "You are cordially invited to attend..." or "(name of important person) invites you to attend..." This should be followed by the title or name of the event in large letters as well as by the date, time and place where the event will be held.

Distribution. If possible, address the release to specific journalists by name. For an event, send the announcement again the week of the event as a reminder. Do not be afraid to call journalists and bring their attention to your release once it is sent. Make sure you send your releases to both print and broadcast resources. Over time, you will be able to establish relationships with those journalists who regularly cover your issues they will come to rely on you as a resource for information.

Issue Brief

An issue brief is in many respects a one-page version of a position paper. It addresses several key components of a position paper (Problem, Assessment, Recommendations) but in less detail. An issue brief is typically aimed at senior decision makers who may not have time themselves to read a position paper but who wish to quickly understand an organisation's position on an issue. *An issue brief is often the only BMO document that a busy decision maker will read.* Developing a one-page issue brief is not as easy as it sounds – care must be taken to include only the most important information while staying true to the campaign's message.

Dialogue Platforms

These can take the form of institutionalized public-private consultations, e.g. joint committees, advisory councils, hearings, etc. These allow for formal participation and structured exchange of opinions between policy makers and BMOs that represent the business community. BMOs should strive for representation in all joint-committees that have relevance for their members.

Policy Workshop/Seminar

The policy workshop is a format that allows an organisation to reach multiple stakeholders simultaneously. It typically focuses on a specific issue of relevance to the members and uses expert speakers to outline the problems and opportunities. The experts will make presentations reflecting their views on the topic followed by a discussion among the experts and attendees.

If well prepared, a policy workshop attracts attention from the media, especially if the keynote speakers are interesting or well-known. The policy seminar is an opportunity to communicate the views of the organisation.

Policy workshops can be used as a public relations event; to dialogue with members; and to network with stakeholders.

Three elements are essential for a workshop to reach full impact: (i) thorough preparation; (ii) clear delivery; and (iii) quick follow up. Presenters must be aware of the time limits for their presentation, and copies of all presentations must be collected in advance. This is important in order to maintain a hands-on management approach to the event. After the event, it is important to follow up with participants. Soon after the event, the organisation should send out a workshop summary to each participant with a cover letter acknowledging their attendance. The summary can be used as an opportunity to remind participants of key issues addressed, positions taken and conclusions reached. *It should never be assume that participants will retain much of the substance.* It is up to the organisation to do the reminding. This is a window of opportunity for giving the right spin on conclusions.

Coalitions

Although there is no definite list of activities for wooing stakeholders, it is important that the organisation adheres to good practice and is transparent about its approach. Normally, it does not take more than an invitation to lunch, for a drink or to the organisation's annual general meeting to maintain a good working relationship. What is important is that the organisation makes it a priority to maintain these relationships in order to continue the dialogue.

Coalitions are a useful way to increase the number of organizations and individuals that support your association's stance on an issue or set of issues. Coalitions enhance the visibility and credibility of your advocacy efforts. Building coalitions is especially important when your association is small in membership and when a broad base of support is needed to ensure adoption of a specific policy, legislative or regulatory change.

One-on-one meetings

This is an informal but direct way of doing advocacy. Meetings are typically held with policy makers on specific issues. Despite the informal nature of these activities, BMOs need to prepare their positions carefully, and that the delegate who establishes the

contact has good communication skills. BMOs may also consider using well-established relations of bigger member companies to support their case. This, however, should only be done if these influential members are willing to promote the BMOs views, and not just their own agenda (cf. also *Background Reading N° 1 What is Policy Advocacy?*)

Grassroots Campaigns:

BMOs may ask their members to support their initiatives by contacting politicians via e-mail, telephone calls, letters, or fax messages. They can organize demonstrations in favour of their political objectives. Through their extended networks, BMOs can easily mobilize a substantial number of enterprises, with a substantial number of employees, and therefore they carry some weight with policy makers. This is a potentially powerful tool, which should not be employed too often or massively, lest the BMO faces the risk of damaging its reputation as a serious dialogue partner.